

LILLOOET LRMP
CONSERVATION, RECREATION, TOURISM AND COMMUNITY
FINAL OFFER

March 13, 2001

D) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This offer has been prepared by members of the Lillooet LRMP table representing tourism, conservation, recreation, and community interests, including the Sierra Club of BC, the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, the Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society, Federation of Cottage Owners (Gun Lake Ratepayers), Chilcotin Holidays Guest Ranch and Guide Outfitters, and Bill Spencer and Mike Kennedy of the Community Resources Board. We have been mindful of the variety of community and industrial interests represented at the LRMP table and believe that this offer meets them in a way that provides enhanced economic diversification opportunities, and maintains the nationally and regionally significant environmental values of the Lillooet plan area. The key elements of this offer are:

- A **protected areas** package representing an additional 8.8% of the land base.
- Habitat protection required for a comprehensive **Grizzly Bear Recovery Strategy**, as recommended by **Ministry of Environment, Lands and parks**.
- An allocation of Timber Harvesting Land Base to be used to accommodate critical habitat required to **maintain riparian forest cover** needed to protect quality and function of fish bearing streams in the region.
- An allocation of Timber Harvesting Land Base to accommodate critical habitat required to **maintain Mule Deer winter range** in the region.
- An allocation of Timber Harvesting Land Base to accommodate critical habitat required to **maintain spotted owl** in the region.
- A short list of **deferred areas** within which management plans would be decided during phase 2 expected to last one year.
- Two **longer-term deferral areas** to **maintain very high environmental values** until specific forestry and access planning requirements are met in adjacent lands.
- **Resource management zones** where a level of management above current practices is required for wildlife, recreation, tourism, and access.

- Over 80% of the high value mineral potential land currently available for **exploration and development of mineral resources**.

SCHEDULE B: PROTECTED AREAS DESCRIPTIONS

Antoine/Fred

The Antoine/Fred proposed protected area boasts a unique elevational sequence of rare dry forest types ranging from high elevation Engelmann spruce subalpine forests to low elevation Ponderosa pine forests. Fred Creek contains rare stands of Interior Douglas Fir (IDFdk1). This area represents important California Bighorn Sheep and Mule Deer winter and spring ranges, migration corridors and sensitive hygric areas. Downstream fisheries values include salmon spawning grounds. The area includes many trails and numerous signs and artifacts of traditional aboriginal use and residence: house pits, mat camps, cache pits and lithic points and tools.

Arthur Seat

Captures a large undisturbed area encompassing most of the largely undisturbed Skoonka Creek watershed in the Scarped Range capturing a large elevational gradient from the Thompson River to the high upland plateau. Stands of old growth in all ecological subzones make this a very important protected area proposal. Arthur Seat provides very important habitat for California bighorn sheep, bald eagle, Western rattlesnake, gopher snake and spotted bats. This proposal has high recreation value and is a regionally significant area for First Nations for root gathering, berry picking and hunting.

Bridge Delta

The Bridge Delta is a key springtime feeding ground for grizzly bears, and is also important habitat for moose, mule deer, fisher, wolverine, waterfowl and raptors. The Bridge River Delta PPA is the only representative sample of the broad valley bottom of the Bridge River system remaining since the Bridge River Valley was dammed and flooded for hydroelectric power generation. This glacially scoured valley bottom delta has intricately braided, glacier-fed tributaries with extensive gravel bars, old growth Douglas fir forests, cottonwood stands and riparian habitat. This Bridge Delta proposal also includes adjacent upland forested bench lands to the north, critical for grizzly bear security.

Cerise Creek

Cerise Creek is an important "pocket wilderness" -- a heavily used mountaineering area, with a mountain hut, contiguous with the established Joffre Lakes protected area. One of the most popular trails in the Lillooet region used extensively in summer by hikers and in winter by ski-tourers.

Cayoosh Goats

High conservation and recreation value. The Cayoosh Goat proposal contains important grizzly bear habitat and includes core habitat for provincially significant mountain goat populations. Recreation values are also high, with extensive alpine ridges and basins offering wilderness hiking and backpacking opportunities.

French Bar Creek Canyon

Representative of the rugged canyon and terraces of the Fraser River. Contains rare dry Douglas fir ecosystems (IDFdk3) and grasslands. High value year round habitat for California bighorn sheep and high value mule deer winter range and migration corridor. Contains historic sheep trails still in good condition.

Gwyneth Lake

Currently MoF Recreation site strategically located along the Hurley Pass Road. Potential site for destination day-use facility serving visitors to the Goldbridge-Bralorne area. Offering fishing, camping, and picnicking Gwyneth connects to hiking trails to nearby Green Mountain and Hurley River waterfalls. There are natural attributes associated with lake and shoreline, including a marsh on the west side of Gwyneth Lake.

Marble Canyon

This 2,300 ha. proposed addition to the protected area system includes spectacular limestone rock faces, canyon and colored lakes of provincial significance. The limestone-derived soils contain rare vascular plants, mosses and lichens. Pavilion Lake contains internationally significant stromatolite formations. Recreation opportunities include rock climbing, ice climbing, fishing, camping, hiking, boating and swimming. There are many archaeological sites, pictographs, and traditional aboriginal trails.

Red Mountain

This official study area is proposed as an Ecological Reserve capturing important subalpine and alpine grassland values. Red Mountain provides critical seasonal habitat and major migration corridors for California bighorn sheep. Red Mountain is characterized by rolling sub-alpine/alpine terrain and First Nations consider Red Mountain a significant traditional area for collection of food and medicinal plants.

Shorthorn

Representation of dry forest and grassland habitats along the Thompson River. Includes rare dry Ponderosa pine and bunchgrass ecosystems. Geological landscape features, including unique gravel terraces, of the Thompson River drainage are captured.

Skihist Park Extension

High conservation and cultural values. This addition would significantly enhance natural values of the existing Skihist Park, representing steep north facing slopes and vegetation conditions along the Thompson River, extending through Ponderosa pine, interior Douglas fir and Engelmann spruce subalpine fir forests. This area is used extensively by elk and mule deer in the winter. Includes a portion of the Cariboo Wagon Road.

South Chilcotin

See following description.

Swan Lake

Located in the East Camelsfoot Range, the Swan Lake proposed Protected Area captures Swan Lake and its associated meadows and upland forests as well as a representative sample of the unique riverine wetlands of Upper North French Bar Creek. This area provides critical habitat for grizzly bear and moose, and is part of a key migration corridor linking the Fraser River through to the South Chilcotins. This area contains highly used wildlife trails along the valley bottom that connect through to the headwaters of Lone Cabin Creek in the Chilcotin.

Yalakom Creek

Contained within Yalakom Cr/9Mile Ridge approved study area. Part of a much larger contiguous area originally identified by RPAT as a protected area candidate for provincially significant wildlife values. Provides representation of the Camelsfoot Range, including: extensive elevational sequence of biogeoclimatic zones, old growth forest, mosaic of dry forests and riparian forests, extensive alpine grassland areas. Critical California bighorn sheep, goat and mule deer migration corridor. There are many trails throughout this area as well as First Nations traditional use interests.

SOUTH CHILCOTIN MOUNTAINS/SPRUCE LAKE

PROTECTED AREA PROPOSAL

"The South Chilcotin Mountains are the single most outstanding area of wilderness not presently protected in the southern interior of B.C. The area has exceptional scenery and unparalleled wilderness recreation potential... and...would be one of the most valued parks in the provincial park system." - B.C. Parks, 1990.

History:

- 1937 Vancouver Natural History Society first advocated the designation of a Provincial Park here making this B.C.'s longest running wilderness issue.
- 1975 Outdoor Recreation Council of B.C. submitted a study to ELUC recommending "establishment of a Class A Park or wilderness area for the headwaters of Tyaughton, Relay and Big Creek that would encompass Spruce Lake and Eldorado Basin to the east."
- 1981 Completion of the Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Plan. No decisions on PA came from this but while protection was being considered, lower Slim, and mid and lower Relay were logged, along with some harvest in lower Gun and Taylor Basin.
- 1987 Ministry of Forests promises wilderness area designation.
- 1990 Government moratorium pending park status decision.
- 1999 In the midst of the LRMP process Lower Tyaughton Creek was roaded (in part along traces of an old mining road) for the purpose of timber harvest (no logging activity yet).

Conservation Values:

- The five major valleys of the PA lie parallel to one another in a south to north fashion, and thus are unique in the way they represent the narrow transition zone between the granite and ice of the Coast Range (Slim, Leckie and Gun Creeks) and the gentler lands of the Chilcotin Plateau (Gun, Tyaughton and Relay Creeks). This ecological transition between coastal/interior and temperate/boreal habitats, along with the wide diversity of topography and low rainfall, has resulted in rich biodiversity and extremely high conservation values.
- The large unroaded area provides habitat for grizzly bear, black bear, mule deer, California bighorn sheep, goat, wolves, wolverine, cougar, marmot and a variety of bird life. The area is an extremely important component of the provincial grizzly protection conservation plan.
- Extensive areas of old growth fir, spruce, aspen, lodgepole, whitebark and Ponderosa pines.
- An abundance of floral diversity unique in B.C. Mid elevation grasslands that are one of B.C.'s most threatened landscapes.
- Lakes and rivers with wild stocks of rainbow trout and Dolly Varden.
- Diversity of geological formations gives rise to spectacular peaks: Cardtable, Castle, Relay and Mount Sheba. Large fossil sites occur next to strong evidence of volcanic activity.
- The Vancouver Natural History Society states "the area is unsurpassed in its potential for outdoor ecological education."
- Parks as islands do not protect conservation values so it is very important that the 73, 000-hectare South Chilcotin Park be created, which along with the adjacent Big Creek South Chilcotin Park (66,600 hectares) will result in a viable 140, 000-hectare wilderness park. This has always been the expectation.

Mid and Back Country Recreation and Tourism Values

- Extremely high wilderness tourism and recreation values. The area is one of the most popular areas for wilderness recreation and tourism in the province and is very close to the major population centres (200 km from Vancouver and 100 km from Whistler). The PA's comparatively gentle terrain and high elevation world class trails (used by indigenous people for centuries) are virtually unique in southern B.C. and provide an attainable wilderness experience for all levels of outdoor enthusiasts with kilometres of trails through open valleys and lush meadows rich in wild flowers, then up past pristine lakes to the mountain passes.
- The Lower Mainland has run out of accessible wilderness prompting Dr. J.P. Kimmins, Faculty of Forestry, U.B.C., to say in a 1985 report that the South Chilcotin "has great merits for a resolution in favour of parks and recreation and would complement Manning Park by providing an outstanding wilderness facility.
- The area is ideally suited to both summer and winter recreation and tourism, including hiking, wildlife viewing, educational training programs, backpacking, horse packing, hunting, fishing, camping, mountain biking, photography, ecological study, cross country skiing, ski-touring, heli-skiing and snowmobiling.
- Whistler recreation and tourism interests look upon the South Chilcotin as the place they have to go, to get the wilderness experience that is no longer available in the immediate Whistler area. The area is now being hailed as one of the finest places for backcountry mountain biking in North America.
- Well established tourism businesses such as Tyax Mountain Lake Resort and Chilcotin Holidays Guest Ranch and Guide Outfitters, operate both within and outside the proposed park. Quality mid and back country experiences are provided for visitors from the Lower Mainland, throughout BC and Canada and from the United States and Europe. There are other backcountry tourism operators locally and from Whistler and Vancouver that use the area extensively.

The Principal Valleys and Basins:

Gun Creek (5) and Tyaughton Creek (4,7,8,19,25)

- These are the core valleys in the PA, with Gun containing the string of emerald lakes: Spruce, Hummingbird, Trigger and Warner Lakes.
- Most of the high timber values in Gun Creek have been accessed over the last 60 years. The remaining portion is included within the park boundary as the other values outweigh the timber value as recognized by the timber industry.
- Gun Creek contains the main access trail into the PA and to Spruce Lake (6). Recreationally this is the busiest area in the PA and is used as the main access point for the back country tourism operators.
- Unique mid-elevation grassland in Gun and Tyaughton creeks, with bluebunch wheatgrass to over 1500 metres (one of B.C.'s most threatened landscapes).
- The high natural environment value is the transition in the terrain from the rugged coast range into the Chilcotin Range. The biodiversity change is significant in this watershed. The wildlife habitat differs from one side of the valley to the other. On the south side it is typical rugged grizzly bear and goat habitat. On the north side it is hospitable glaciated sandy shale terrain and high value, big horn sheep and mule deer habitat. This habitat is so valuable to the mule deer and the sheep that the mule deer migrate over 150 km. from the east side of the Fraser River to summer here. Some of the sheep herd in the Taseko Valley 50 km to the north migrate south to summer here as well. The diversity of the plant community with over 100 species is because of this unique transition ecosystem.
- The high social value for this area is highlighted by the three sub alpine lakes, Hummingbird, Trigger, and Warner, and the low pass at the top end that connects with the Taseko Lake watershed to the north. This valley also contains Spruce Lake and Deer Pass which connects Gun Valley to Tyaughton Valley. Mt. Sheba is the highest peak in the area at 9500 feet. Access and use in Gun Creek valley includes horseback riding, hiking, floatplane, and mountain biking. The park management plan is seen as the only tool capable

of managing the heavy and sometimes conflicting use. The park buffer RMZs for access control are seen as essential to control trail heads and manage the number of people and type of activities entering the park.

- The high natural environment value is the transition zone between the Coast Range and the Chilcotin plateau which creates a biodiversity of habitats, attracting a wide range of wildlife. The predominant wildlife species are the three California big horn sheep populations. One herd migrates 50 km to summer here and comes from the Taseko Lake area, another migrates 100 km from the Fraser River, and the third herd winters here. This last herd is unique in that they have adapted to the wind swept mountain tops and winter at 2500 meters elevation. The mule deer that summer in this area migrate up to 150 km, while another herd from the North migrates over 100 km from the Chilcotin River. Others come from the east, from both sides of the Fraser River 150 km away. The herd from the South Carpenter Lake area migrate 30 km. It is thought that the attractions for both the sheep and the mule deer to the area are the abundant mineral springs. The migration corridor conditions are critical to keep these sheep and mule deer returning to this area. The park only preserves the Tyaughton Creek. Portions of these long migration corridors in the RMZ east of the Fraser River is the other half of the plan. That is needed to keep the sheep and deer population in the park viable. Grizzlies in this valley are predominately with cubs. The most important fall feed for the Grizzly is the white bark pine nuts and marmots; Both are plentiful in this area. The many miles of open side hills at various elevations provide all the good habitat for the spring feed. These factors make this area very important for Grizzly. Some Mt. Goat in habit this area as well as some black bears. This large unit representative of the North/South biogeoclimatic transition. It straddles a geological cross section from the edge of the Pacific Ranges through the Chilcotin Ranges. There are basalts and sedimentary formations and interesting landforms and mountain ie: Cardtable Mountain, Mt. Sheba, Castle Peak. Some of the most unique grassland plant associations include mid-elevation grasslands in Tyaughton and Gun Creek. The bluebunch wheatgrass to over 2500 meters.

Leckie Creek (9) and upper Slim

- Leckie, called the most primitive valley in the Lillooet TSA by the Ministry of Forests (and the last truly intact, unroaded valley in the PA), is integral to this PA being a grizzly protection area; also important goat habitat (not found extensively in the rest of the PA), moose, wolf and wolverine habitat.
- Extensive environmentally sensitive wetlands and alpine lakes plateau.
- Leckie connects the middle of the Gun Creek valley to the upper end of the Gun Creek valley via Wolverine Pass. It also connects to upper Slim Creek and west to Nichols Creek, so it is an important wildlife corridor. Industrial exploitation of Leckie, a natural connector lying parallel to the Gun Creek valley, would change the complexion of the PA irreparably. It would open up the entire PA to day hikes, diminishing the opportunities for the overnight camper, along with the severe loss of conservation values. Spruce Lake could be a two-hour hike from the trailhead instead of six, and upper Gun to the Taseko River valley, via Taylor Pass, might be three hours instead of three days currently.
- With Leckie Creek the South Chilcotin PA maintains its extremely high conservation values. Without Leckie the PA's values become more for mid-country recreation and tourism, and not for conservation and back country recreation and tourism.
- Leckie Creek and upper Slim contain only 702 and 300 hectares of THLB respectively.
- The conservation and back country recreation and tourism values of the South Chilcotins are not available elsewhere, particularly when proximity to major population centres is taken into account.
- Has low mineral values and area is referred to as tombe stone. Consequently there is no potential for a mine anywhere in the Slim Creek Valley. However there is a potential for a mine over the mountain in Taseko Valley and if and when there is one on access road from the south may be required. This access has been planned for by keeping the next valley to the west (Nichols Creek) out of the park. It is recognized that cross region road development is not popular.
- All the highest natural environment values have been included with the park boundaries to facilitate rest management. Wildlife migration corridors interconnect like spokes on a wheel with the low pass at the back of Slim being the hub. The Valleys are Nichols, Granite, Griswold, Taseko, Gun, Leckie, and Slim.

The four main species that require this connectivity are grizzly bears, mountain goats, wolverine and moose. Secondary species are mule deer and black bear.

- The high social value also lies in the high elevation interconnection between the seven valleys. The main uses include hiking, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. The goal is to retain the wilderness value and the access RMZ is viewed as the tool to manage trail heads away from the park boundary the appropriate distance.
- Leckie is the most rugged valley in the area and provides an experience not available in the rest of the park.

Eldorado, Cinnabar and Taylor Basins (10,11,12,20,21and 22)

- Among the finest alpine basins in the province for accessible backcountry recreation, tourism and conservation values.
- The entire PA, and particularly these basins, is unique in B.C. for floral diversity. The Vancouver Natural History Society has identified over 125 plant species in these basins alone.
- Eldorado, Cinnabar and Taylor Basins contain only 921 hectares of THLE.

Relay Creek (1,2,3,14,15,16,17,18 and 23)

- Upper Relay is the top end of the northern most valley in the PA and completes the transition from the coastal valleys (Slim and Leckie) to the Chilcotin plateau.
- Rich in alpine meadows and biodiversity, upper Relay is the main connection to Big Creek for both people and wildlife.

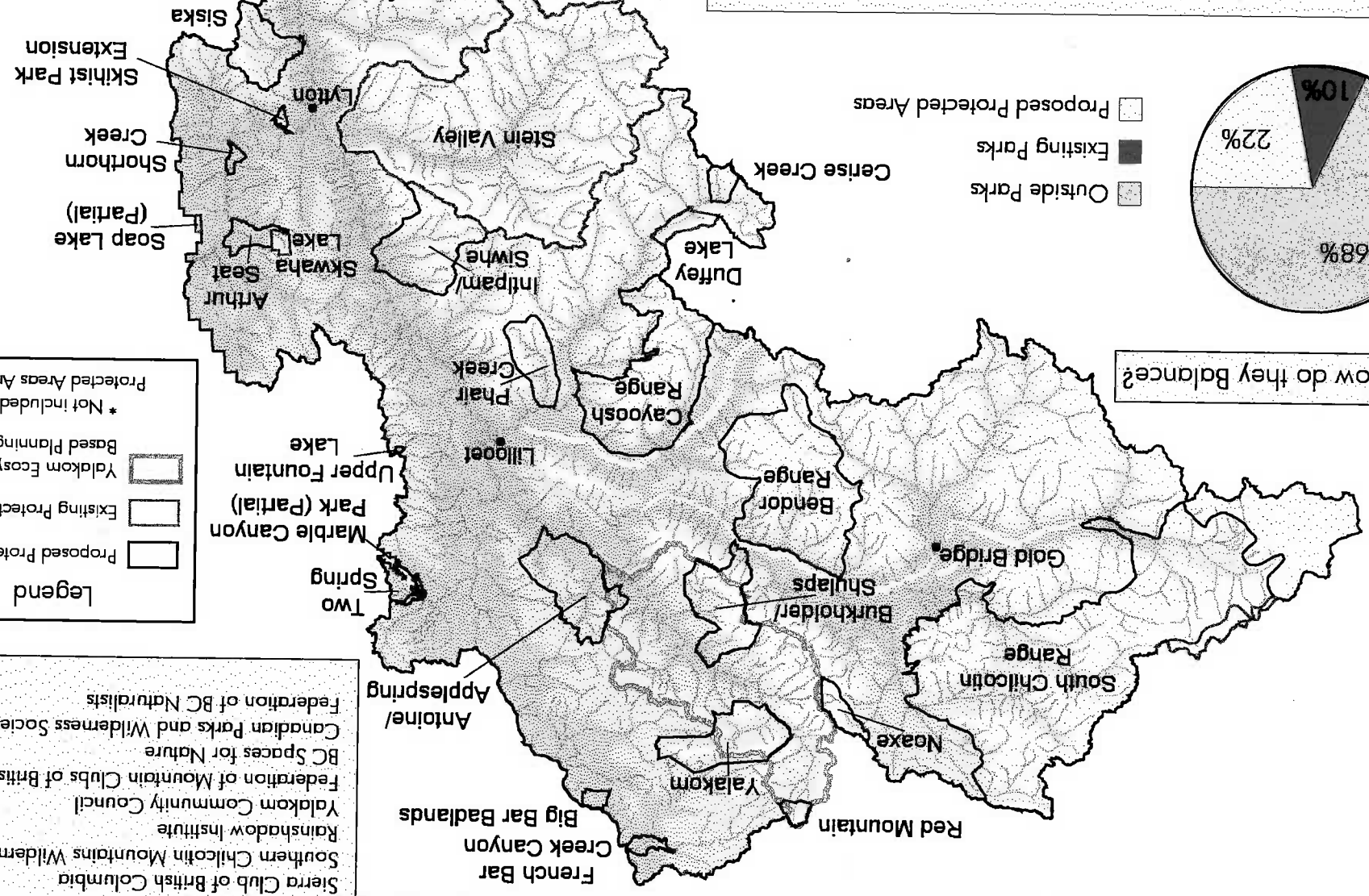
Lillooet LRMF Conservation Sector Protected Areas Proposal

The Proposed Protected Areas compiled by:

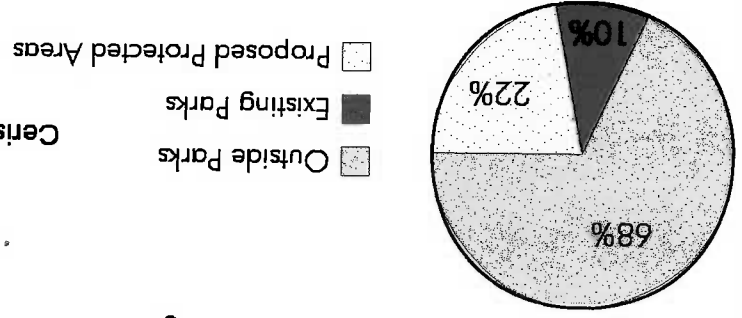
- Sierra Club of British Columbia
- Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society
- Rainshadow Institute
- Yalakom Community Council
- Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia
- BC Spaces for Nature
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- Federation of BC Naturalists

Legend

- Proposed Protected Areas
- Existing Protected Areas
- Yalakom Ecosystem Based Planning Area*
- * Not included in Protected Areas Analysis



How do they balance?



Description	Area (ha)	Area (%)
Outside Parks and Protected Areas	770,099	68
Existing Parks	112,585	10
Proposed Protected Areas	242,642	22
Total LRMF Area	1,125,326	100

